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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9148
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1371
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1449
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 6485
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000356

SIPDIS

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RIYADH, PLEASE PASS TO DHAHRAN; DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP;
PARIS FOR ZEYA; LONDON FOR TSOU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/13/2016
TAGS: [KISL](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SA](#) [SOCI](#)
SUBJECT: ARABIC LANGUAGE WEB-SITE AL SAHAT PRESENTS
BIOGRAPHY OF SUSPECT IN SHOOTING AT U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL
JEDDAH

REF: JEDDAH 347

11. (C) SUMMARY. Within hours of the May 12 drive-by shooting at ConGen Jeddah, the Arabic language web-site Al Sahat carried a brief biography of the suspect and described him as a psychopath. By May 14, this web-page had been amended with additional information on the suspect, including a reference to a brother arrested for "deviant" activities. Only a name identified the person posting the information. There was no indication how he obtained information that was not carried by the media. By Sunday morning more than five thousand people had accessed the web-site, but no comments were left. The web-site did not carry any references to the attack itself. Several of the CG's contacts discounted the assertion that the shooter was insane. One contact hinted that a conservative faction within the Saudi government was feeding self-serving information to the public through the web-site. END SUMMARY.

WEB-SITE QUICKLY POSTS BIOGRAPHY OF ACCUSED SHOOTER

12. (U) Within twelve hours of the time when it is alleged a single person in a passing car fired one or more shots at ConGen Jeddah, the virulently anti-American and Islamic fundamentalist Arabic language web-site Al Sahat carried a posting identifying the individual. The shooting occurred at about 5:30 P.M. on Friday May 12. In a posting at 5:38 A.M. the following morning, May 13, a Mohammed Salah posted a web-page titled: "Photo of the Person Accused of Firing at the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah." The page contained a photograph of the suspect's identification card and a photograph, which also appeared in that morning's edition of the Saudi Gazette, showing an empty pistol holster laying amid other belongings in the street after the police had apprehended the suspect and searched his car.

SUSPECT DESCRIBED AS PSYCHOPATH

13. (U) The posting described the suspect as a psychopath and offered a brief biography. His full name was given as Mohammed Abdulrazik Fifi, aged 33 and born in Raghdan. It further stated that he had received his early education in Raghdan and went to secondary school in al Baha. He went to the College of Teachers in al Baha and graduated from the Arabic Language Department. Fifi is then reported to have taught at Al Ba'athia School in al Baha until he suffered an emotional breakdown and was transferred to another school in the region. Salah then relates that Fifi's condition

worsened, and he was given a sabbatical almost a month ago.

SECOND POSTING DESCRIBES CONNECTION TO DEVIANTS AND DECLINING MENTAL STATE

¶4. (U) By Sunday morning, May 14 the same Mohammed Salah had augmented his remarks with the following information: "The accused," says Salah, "Mohammed Abdulrazik Al Ghamdy (rather than Fifi, as in the previous day's posting), is the younger brother of Saad Abdulrazik Al Ghamdy, one of the deviant group who was arrested in an internet cafe in Medina earlier."

¶5. (U) The statement continues: "Meanwhile, the Headmaster of the school where Mohammed was teaching in al Baha stated that the accused has lately been tending to isolation. He was absent from work several times for no given reason. In the last two months, his case got worse so he notified his family. Lately, he was given a two months sabbatical till he gets better. He added that Mohammed was treated like the rest of the teachers and was doing his job well but he had very (sic) limited circle of friends."

¶6. (U) By 11:30 A.M. on May 14, this web-site had registered more than 5,400 visits, but no comments had been left by readers. There were no speculations as to motive or objectives or references to the actual shooting at the Consulate.

WEB SITE PROVIDED SENSITIVE INFORMATION AND DETAILS

¶7. (C) COMMENT: There is no information identifying the writer, Mohammed Salah, other than his name on the web-posting. He seems to have obtained photographs taken

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either by authorities or the media, and in the case of the identification card, a photograph that should have been restricted to the possession of the police. The personal information contained in this web-page is similar to reports carried in the English-language papers, with the exception of the reference to a family member involved in an unidentified "deviant group arrested in a (Medina) internet cafe." It is impossible to determine if the writer had a connection with the family that allowed him to obtain this information, or if he had contacts among the authorities who furnished him with these facts. END COMMENT.

¶8. (C) Several of the CG's of high-level contacts have commented on this web-site, telling her they are very skeptical of the assertion that the perpetrator was insane or unbalanced. One, a prominent consultant, observed that the people who commit acts such as this one are always described as insane. He wondered who populated Saudi Arabia's mental facilities, since so many madmen seem to be loitering around Palestine Street in Jeddah. Princess Lolowa, sister of the Saudi Foreign Minister, in a conversation with the CG on May 14 stated that she frequently monitored al Sahat because conservative interests often employ it to criticize her efforts to promote women's rights in the Kingdom. She dismissed the insanity claim and insinuated that conservative elements within the security services or elsewhere in the government have determined that this embarrassing incident should be blamed on the actions of a madman and were making common cause with the operators of the web-site to promote their rationale. COMMENT: This event hints at the intrigues that go on behind the scenes in Saudi Arabia, as various factions seek to disseminate their interpretation of events to the public. END COMMENT.
Gfoeller